

## Comfort and Joy

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# **Comfort and Joy**

by [milleniumrex](#)

## Summary

An injury leaves Rikki in a tricky situation. Fortunately, her friends are there to back her up.

Rikki lay back on the examining table, wincing as the doctor prodded her throbbing ankle, positioning it for x-rays. She knew injuries were a part of life as a superhero - she just hadn't expected a fall in gym class to be the thing that landed her in the Emergency Room.

"We'll have to wait for the x-rays to come out, but it seems like a textbook non-displaced fracture. You'll likely need a cast." The doctor said as he scribbled in his notebook. "You said this happened in school?"

"Yeah, volleyball. I was trying to go for the ball, and - "

"Sports injury..." The doctor continued scribbling. "You've called a parent or guardian? We'll need them to sign some forms."

"Yeah, I called, but my - " Rikki paused, reminding herself not to give too much away. "He's out of town a lot. It might be a while."

"Hm." The doctor eyed her suspiciously. "You don't have anyone else you can call?"

"Not really. But he'll be here."

Rikki eased herself off the bench and into the waiting wheelchair, where a nurse pushed her back to the examining room to wait for the x-rays. Rikki looked nervously at the phone. She had left Steve a message, but who even knew where he was? He could be halfway around the world right now, battling the Red Skull. Or he could be making his way over, she told herself, trying to convince herself not to worry. In a way, getting hurt in combat was easier. There were less witnesses, and you could take care of it yourself or go see the Night Nurse. But an injury at school? That meant lots of attention, and a trip to the emergency room, and lots of questions there were no way to answer without giving away that you weren't from around here.

As she was lost in thought, there was a light knock behind her. Awkwardly turning the wheelchair around, she could see a face peeking up slightly in the slender window at the side of the room.

"Anya?"

"Heya, Rikk." Anya waved. "Had to check up on you."

Before Rikki could react, Anya slipped through the window, leapt down onto the floor, and crouched down next to her.

"How did you even know I was here?"

Anya shrugged. "Word travels fast in that school. Someone was talking in Algebra about you getting hurt, so I skipped school to come here." Anya peered down at Rikki's ankle. "Ouch."

"Doesn't hurt nearly as much as the time I had to break my thumbs." Rikki said with a shrug. "It's a lot trickier, though. They want to know all sorts of things about me. Things I really

don't have any answers for, you know?"

"Yeah. I know." Anya said with a compassionate smile, slipping her hand over Rikki's. "Ever since my dad died, I've been dealing with a lot of that too. It's especially hard this time of year. But I guess...we make our own family, right?"

"Right." Rikki said as she leaned in to give Anya a quick kiss on the lips. "Thanks for showing up here. Even if it means you're probably going to get detention."

"Small price to pay."

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"Everything should be in order, then?"

"Yes, I suppose so." The doctor eyed Steve with a bit of suspicion and confusion. "Sir, are you sure you don't need to see a doctor yourself? You look - "

"I'll be fine. It looks worse than it is." Steve said, wiping his face as he handed the doctor back the sheets. "She's ready to go home?"

"Yes, we shouldn't need to keep her any longer. Just make sure she rests, stays off the leg for a month, and comes in for scheduled x-rays in two weeks."

Rikki was balancing on a pair of crutches as Steve entered the room, with Anya hovering protectively by her, ready to catch her if she stumbled. Her eyes lit up as Steve walked in.

"You made it! Sorry I had to call, it's just that they were - "

"It's no problem. I'm sorry I took so long. I was breaking up a weapons ring in Brooklyn when you called."

Rikki cocked an eye at Steve's split lip. "I can see."

"Trust me, they got the worst of it." Steve laughed. "Besides, I should be the one worried about you, from the looks of it."

"I'll be fine. Just as soon as I get the hang of these sticks." Rikki sighed. "Just wish I had a better story to go with it."

"Trust me, you're not alone. I think the Avengers have more injuries in our annual baseball game than we do in our missions. I'm pretty sure I've got a few scars from Hawkeye's cleats alone."

"I sense story." Anya grinned.

"Anyway, I think I'll be okay." Rikki nodded. "I'm taking an involuntary vacation from crimefighting for the next month, but I'll live."

"I don't really like the idea of you hobbling around your apartment by yourself, though." Steve said thoughtfully. "We've always got a lot of extra room in Avengers Tower. Why don't you stay there, just until you've healed up a bit?"

"Really? I don't want to impose on anyone? I'll be fine, and - "

"It's not imposing if you're family." Steve said as he put his hand on Rikki's shoulder. "I know I've let you find your own way since you arrived here, but the Avengers are more than happy to look out for you. Besides, it's the Holidays, and no one should be alone then."

"Okay." Rikki nodded. "I'll come. But only on one condition." She turned towards Anya.

"Actually...Ben kinda already invited me over for the holidays." Anya grinned. "I was going to tell you later and ask if you wanted to come, but I guess now it's settled."

"The Avengers take care of their own." Steve nodded. "So how about it?"

Rikki took Anya's hand as Steve led them out to the car. It had been a stressful day, but in the end, what she would remember wasn't the pain or the stress, but the fact that even as far away from home as she was, she would never be alone. Family didn't necessarily mean blood, and Anya, Steve, the Allies, and the Avengers - they were as much family as any girl could ask for.

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